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THE
ECCLESIASTICAL AND RELIGIOUS
STATISTICS OF SCOTLAND.

SHOWING

1ST. THE NUMBER OF ADHERENTS IN EACH DENOMINATION.

2D. THAT THERE ARE MORE THAN HALF A MILLION OF THE
POPULATION UNCONNECTED WITH ANY CHURCH.

BY THE

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THE
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INTRODUCTION.

ARE the churches in Scotland capable of dealing successfully with the great moral, social, and religious evils which now threaten to sap the foundations of society? Drunkenness, commercial dishonesty, pauperism, crime, ignorance, the disorganization of the relationships between man and man, and between man and God. These and kindred evils are burdening the hearts and perplexing the minds of many good and thoughtful Christians. Earnest men are attempting to grapple with these evils, and many noble efforts are put forth. Societies are formed, liberally supported, and energetically wrought. Temperance Societies, Benevolent Associations, Sabbath School and Foundry Boys' Societies, National Education, City Missions, Home Missions, &c., all of these varied and admirable organizations conducted, with rare exceptions, by Christian men, *but all as associations wrought OUTSIDE THE CHURCH OF CHRIST*, or connected by ties too feeble to bind, or too formal to strengthen them.

If these societies were able to cope with the evils they are designed to remedy, we might be content to look on and approve, or as individuals to bear our share in the labours of one or more of them. But when we see these evils in most cases on the increase, in spite of the efforts put forth to stay them; and when we hear the most intelligent and earnest of our philanthropists calling for help, or desponding in the midst of their labour, the question is forced on our attention, Are the churches in Scotland mere conservative institutions existing for themselves and the salvation of

individual souls; or do they exist for the salvation of society, and for the sweetening and sanctifying of all the relations between man and man, as well as between man and God?

It is not, however, my intention to attempt any solution of social or religious problems, or to point out the way in which the Christian Church should deal with them. I take the humbler task of showing in what relation the different churches of our country stand to one another, and to the population in the midst of which, and for the good of which, under God, they do or ought to exist and labour.

I purpose to show, first, the relative numbers or strength of the different churches in Scotland, and more particularly of the three leading denominations, that they may realize their true position and responsibility; and second, to show the work which remains to be overtaken by their united efforts in harmonious co-operation with all Evangelical Churches—the vast multitudes lying around in practical ungodliness—endangering society and ruining their own souls.

I have faith in the power of facts, even in the dry form of statistics. Former experience in a similar field of labour encourages me. Without laying claim to any merit beyond that of a careful compiler, I am thankful to record the fact that within a year of the publication of my two pamphlets on the “Religious Destitution in Glasgow,” three societies were formed for church extension by the leading denominations in the city, and another for the purpose of promoting united action in Christian work. These societies have done, and are still doing, much good. I trust the present effort, as it relates to a larger field, will lead to greater results. In the meantime I only give an *estimate* for the whole of Scotland, along with a few samples of statistical returns from different parts of the country, to show a little of what needs to be done, and what can be done, if such inquiries are undertaken by all the parties who are interested and responsible. It is only by a combined effort of the Established, Free, and United Presbyterian Churches that a complete religious census of Scotland can be secured.

It is with extreme reluctance I feel myself compelled to question and criticize the “Report of the General Assembly’s Committee on Christian Life and Work.” The objects aimed at in that report are most commendable and worthy of imitation by other churches.

But its statistical returns seem to be most fallacious and injurious, not only to other churches, but what is of far more importance, injurious to the outlying population, by under-estimating their numbers, and lulling the churches into a false security. Nothing shall be said by me to hurt the feelings of any one, or to mar the spirit of brotherly love. One of my great aims is to promote united and earnest co-operation among all the churches of Christ in Scotland.

In these times, when we have seen so much of the spirit of Christian union and combined action among the ministers of all denominations, I would be the last to mar that harmony, nor are my statements either designed or fitted to do so. And if any man uses the facts I bring forward for mere party ends or purposes of strife, let the blame rest with those who overlook or pervert my chief aim—the good of the poor. I write in the interests of truth and the cause of the neglected and perishing.

I have devoted all the time at my disposal, in the midst of varied and arduous labours, to accumulation of facts and figures; for these I ask no forbearance. I have, however, written in great haste, and crave indulgence for defects; having attended only to accuracy in statistics, not to elegance of style.

ADHERENTS IN EACH DENOMINATION.

Almost all the churches in Scotland keep, and many of them publish, full particulars of their membership every year, but none of the Non-established Churches take official notice of the membership of other denominations, or of the members attending no church. The Established Church, while giving only imperfect details and rough estimates as to the aggregate of her members, has of late shown a laudable zeal to discover the condition of other churches as well as of her own, and to ascertain the numbers of the non-church-going population.

If these efforts had been satisfactory, or even an approximation to accuracy, I would thankfully have accepted and used them; but being, as I believe, very erroneous and injurious, as well as dangerously misleading to herself, by inducing satisfaction in the fancied greatness of her position and usefulness, or tempting her to pre-

sume on her national supremacy and political influence, they ought to be corrected. Chiefly, however, do I deprecate the errors in the ecclesiastical statistics, from their obvious inaccuracy leading candid and earnest men to regard the estimate of the non-church-going population as equally erroneous. But for the sake of this class, and those evils in society to which I urgently call the attention of all the churches in Scotland, I would not have meddled with this difficult and delicate subject, which has cost me much thought and labour. If I succeed in stirring up the leading denominations to investigate the matter thoroughly, my first object will be accomplished, and my ultimate and higher aim will, with God's blessing, be sure to follow.

In giving an estimate of the number of adherents of the churches in Scotland I would naturally begin with the Established Church; but as we are not provided with facts of a reliable kind, we can only arrive at an estimate of her adherents at the close of our investigation of the number belonging to all other denominations and of no denomination—an exhaustive process to which we are driven by her own reticence or neglect, and of which no one can complain. If we can find out, as I believe we can, the numbers belonging to the different non-established religious denominations, both Protestant and Romanist, and form a fair estimate of the numbers who attend no church, we may suppose that the remainder belong to the Established Church. The connection may be less or more real and close, according to circumstances, but that number that Church may fairly claim, and for them she is held responsible. It is the course pursued by Dr. J. Elder Cumming, at page 43 of his book *The Church of Scotland*.

THE FREE CHURCH.

There is little difficulty in finding the numbers belonging to the Free Church. The returns made year after year are published in detail for each congregation in a form that makes the detection of an error easy and almost inevitable. If there is any danger of error it is in *the temptation to lower the number of members*.

The number of *members* of the Free Church in the Lowlands in the beginning of 1873 was 210,000. Of these the larger proportion

are in towns or mining districts, where many attend church without becoming members, and those who do, are generally later in joining the church than in the country; we may, therefore, safely multiply two-thirds of this number, or 140,000 for town congregations, by three to find the number of adherents of all ages, according to Mr. Leoni Levi's rule.* The remaining third, viz. 70,000, I multiply by two and a half. In a few rural districts, where all the population above a certain age are members of some church, and that age an early one, I find that even this is too large a figure; but these districts are exceptional. The reason for this rule I shall give further on. In the Highlands we must adopt a different rule. There the number in full communion is very small compared with the population. But in this case we have a surer test. The *average attendance* in the Free Church in the Highlands was, during the year 1872, 75,000 or 80,000. The question then is, what number of persons of all ages will this represent?

The highest provision in church accommodation required by Dr. Chalmers was 62 per cent., and few in our day would ask sittings in church for more than half the population, and that only in small parishes, where the greatest number could attend, and even then, the provision is for the largest possible number that could attend at one time under the most favourable conditions. No man ever expects every seat in every church over a large district to be always filled. But taking the lower average in the

* It may be desirable to state, for the information of any not familiar with such inquiries, that the number of children of all ages, and young or old persons who attend a church without being in full communion with it, is found by experience in many congregations to be twice as many as the number of members on a well-kept communion roll. So that the entire number connected with a church may be found by multiplying the number of members by three, and *all such, both members and others, would be called ADHERENTS*. Thus a congregation with 300 communicants or members multiplied by 3 would give 900 adherents or persons connected with that congregation. This rule was first applied by Mr. Leoni Levi to England, where many attend church without being members. I found it for the same reason applicable to a city like Glasgow, and used it in 1868 as confirmatory of my calculations from other data. But as I shall afterwards show, it gives far too many adherents in rural districts of Scotland; and in the Highlands it is quite inapplicable, where we often find instead of one in three, or one in two and a half being members, not one in ten become communicants, in which case we would require to multiply by *ten* to find the entire number connected with a church or congregation.

Highlands at 75,000, we must add a large number to the double of this number for those who cannot be regularly present. A third or fourth would be a reasonable allowance under any circumstances; but in the Highlands, where, with all their love for the house of God, they have to contend with very long and rough roads and a stern climate, we might allow considerably more. Add only *one-fourth* to the 75,000, and multiplying by *two*, we will have 187,000 as the Highland population adhering to the Free Church.

After having made my calculation, without indicating my view, I asked the best authority on this subject whom I could find—I may say the best who could be found—Dr. T. M'Lauchlan of Edinburgh, and he told me that his estimate for the Free Church population in the Highlands was 200,000; and when told my estimate, he authorized me to say that he was prepared to endorse it fully. He would have urged me to accept his larger figure, but that, "it was safer to be within what he believed to be the truth than to exceed it."

The membership of the Free Church in the Lowlands being 210,000, of these the returns may be known and tested by any one, as the number of members in each congregation is published yearly. Of these fully two-thirds are in our larger towns or mining and manufacturing centres, we shall have the following result by the rules we indicated, and the valid ground for which I shall demonstrate when I apply it to the membership of the Established Church.

Two-thirds of 210,000 members multiplied by three gives 420,000 adherents of all ages, and one-third multiplied by two and a half gives 175,000. To these numbers we add not fewer than 8000 connected with mission stations, giving, with the 187,000 in the Highlands, a total of 790,000 adherents of the Free Church.

That this estimate is lower than I need have made it, will appear not only from the process by which it is arrived at, but from the following additional considerations:—

First. Dr. J. E. Cumming, at page 43 of his work on the Church of Scotland, allows that the adherents of the Free Church were 785,000 at a time when the *members* were 7000 fewer than they were in 1872, or, by his mode of calculation, more than 810,000. Second. The return of marriages by the Registrar gives the pro-

portion by Free Church ministers at 25·3 per cent. of all the marriages in Scotland. This would give the Free Church 848,000 adherents, or a fourth of the inhabitants; but as we do not trust to such methods for such an object, we set it aside as excessive, even though Dr. Cumming, as a supporter of the Establishment, is not likely to exaggerate the numbers of the Free Church.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The United Presbyterian Church may be treated in the same way as the Lowland congregations of the Free Church. There are much the same securities for carefulness and accuracy in purging the communion rolls and making annual returns to the Synod. The membership at the end of 1872 was 162,354. As the great majority of these are in towns or industrial centres, we may apply the same rules, and multiply two-thirds of the number by three, and the remaining third by two and a half. This will give as the number of adherents of all ages in the United Presbyterian Church, 469,969 souls. To these we must add for persons under the care of missionaries say only 4000 souls, as they are closely allied in our larger towns with city missions, making a total in round numbers, of 474,000.

This estimate is confirmed in a remarkable way by the Registrar General's statistics. The marriages by ministers of the United Presbyterian Church are given at 14·29 per cent. of the whole. That would give in 1872, 485,000 adherents. As the ministers of this denomination are not in the habit of marrying many out of their own communion, this cannot be far from the truth.

Dr. Cumming tries to correct this return of the Registrar General's by the return of baptisms as given by the United Presbyterian Church in their annual Report. These are on an average of only about 9 per cent. of the number of births in the entire population; and as he cannot think of any way of reconciling the two returns, he sees fit to accept the return of baptisms as trustworthy, and assumes that that for communicants is false, the rolls not being corrected at deaths or removals, and he accordingly sets down the number of adherents at only 300,000. But did it not strike Dr. C. that a very large number of children die before they

are baptized, a number nearly large enough to account for the discrepancy? To make absolutely no allowance for such a fact was a strange oversight.

OTHER DENOMINATIONS.

For the following denominations I am favoured with both the number of members and adherents on the best official authority, accompanied in most cases by such grounds as would satisfy any reasonable mind, and I give them publicity without fear of contradiction. They are not all published like the returns of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches.

1. The Reformed Presbyterian Church has a membership of 8500, including the seceding party, who form only an eighth or ninth of the whole, and as their terms of communion are strict, we cannot multiply this number by less than three, giving as adherents 25,500.

2. "The United Original Secession" have a communion roll of 3200 members, and on the same grounds fairly claim 9500 adherents.

3. The Episcopal Church in Scotland lays claim to 60,000 of the population as adherents, and considering that, including the English branch of that Church, it is only about 300 adherents for each congregation, it cannot be regarded as excessive. My information is from the best authority.

4. The Congregational Churches of Scotland have a membership of 12,700, and the adherents, not including members, are returned at 20,500, making a total of 33,200. From the high character and thorough official knowledge of my informant, these figures may be fully relied on. They are confirmed by, and are strikingly confirmatory of my rule of calculating in such a case, taking half as country and the other half town or industrial districts. By multiplying half the membership by two and a half, and the other half by three, we get a total of 33,925. I set them down at 33,000.

5. The Baptist Union of Scotland publishes a list of its congregations, and, with few exceptions, the number of members in each congregation is given. Those given amount in all to 5067. The gentleman who kindly sends me the report, favours me with an estimate for 10 congregations which sent no return; and as he allows

for each only a membership of 50 individuals, while those making returns average 100 each, it cannot be too high. He also estimates the congregations not connected with the Union at a similarly low figure, only allowing 60 members for each, making in all 6500 in full communion. Taking into account the lowness of these estimates, and the terms of membership in that body, we cannot reckon the entire number of adherents at less than 24,000. It is less than 300 souls of all ages for each congregation.

6. As might be expected, the Wesleyan Methodists have a thorough knowledge of all their members. Their number has been kindly furnished by the secretary, who sets down the number of adherents at three times the number of *fully* accredited members, of whom there are 5500. But as this means not merely the number of those who are enrolled as entitled from knowledge and character to sit down at the Lord's table, but belonging to an inner circle of those who are in regular attendance under the class leaders, I consider they may justly claim a larger following; and so I allow them 18,500, and, adding a small number for Primitive Methodists, say 2000, not included in the above, we may set down the Methodists of Scotland at 20,500. I am told, by well-informed persons, that there are 5000 or 6000 of the Primitive Methodists.

7. The "Evangelical Union" keeps no record of the membership of the whole Church, though the communion rolls of individual congregations are carefully kept. One of the oldest and most intelligent of the ministers of that Church informs me that it is very generally accepted, in their conferences of the ministers and office-bearers, that the membership of their 82 congregations in Scotland is 11,000 in all, and that, as these are mostly in towns and industrial centres, the number of adherents will be fully three times that number, viz. 33,000. As this is only an average of 137 communicants for each congregation, I see no reason to question the accuracy of the estimate; but as three or four of the congregations are out of Scotland, I have put them down at 30,000.

8. To these we must add, for the Society of Friends, Plymouth Brethren, and other small bodies, not fewer adherents than 15,000.

9. There are a large number of persons under a kind of supervision, and attending on the ordinance of preaching under our city

and coast missions, who cannot be classed either with regular church-goers or the neglecters of ordinances. These cannot be reckoned at fewer than 20,000 in the whole of Scotland.

Coming now to sects beyond the pale of the Protestant and Evangelical Churches, we have:—

1. The Socinians and fifteen or more heterodox sects, which cannot be reckoned at fewer than 10,000, judging by the numbers in attendance, and the sittings provided for them, three or four times more than they occupied, as seen in the census of 1851.

2. The Roman Catholic population is variously estimated. I find that intelligent and candid priests and laymen claim 300,000 adherents of their Church in Scotland, *i.e.* 100,000 in Glasgow, 100,000 more in the West Country, and 100,000 for the East and the Highlands. Some Protestants reckon their numbers at a much higher figure, and for political purposes ardent men among themselves do so. But few intelligent inquirers will allow of or claim more than that number. Dr. J. E. Cumming puts them down at 270,000, but from defective returns, which we cannot accept. I shall estimate them at 290,000.

NEGLECTING CHURCH ORDINANCES.

Finally, we come to the number of those who are in the sad condition of neglecting all Church ordinances. It is impossible to say with absolute accuracy how many there are in this condition. The number must be very large. In Glasgow they form thirty per cent. of the nominally Protestant population; they swarm in all our large towns, and in many of our mining populations they form the half, and in some they are the large majority of the population. We have too much reason to believe that there cannot be less than 600,000 of this class in Scotland.

The Report of the General Assembly of the Established Church for last May, gives an average of 14·51 per cent. as attending no church. Out of 1,111,454 of the population analyzed in 507 parishes, there were 161,296 reported as neglecting ordinances. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of this part of the return made, as it is on the *profession* of the people. If the “analysis” means anything it means this; and it is a sad proof of the condition

of Scotland, that even the parish ministers are under the painful necessity of reporting so many as 14·51 per cent. as *professedly* belonging to no Church. This rate would give 450,000 of the non-Catholic population as neglecting ordinances—a number distressingly large; but the real state of matters is far worse. In the returns from which this result is deduced Glasgow is not included, and we know in what a vast proportion that would have swollen the percentage. Glasgow presbytery alone would have given a third of the whole number set down as non-church-going. Again, as I shall show in the returns from presbyteries, there are vast numbers not accounted for as belonging either to the Protestant Church or the class neglecting ordinances, or to the Roman Catholics: of these the large proportion should have been added to this class. 600,000 would, we are convinced, not be an excessive estimate for those neglecting ordinances in Scotland. But the number being so uncertain, we shall put it down between the two estimates at 530,000. This estimate will be further confirmed when we have ascertained by another process the membership of the Established Church.

THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

We have now accounted for 2,331,000 of the entire population. As the returns were made in 1872 for presentation to the Assembly of 1873, we must add to the 3,358,613 in the census made on the 3d of April, 1871, more than a year of increase, which is set down at the rate of 9·72 per cent. for the last decennial period, or a little over 32,000 per annum. Say that we add 35,487, and we have the double advantage of a near approximation to accuracy, and a saving of precious time by getting a round number for our calculations, viz. 3,394,000.

On principle as well as for convenience I prefer to use round numbers in such calculations. The use of units and tens or fractions, except when to be used for multiplication, I reckon a mere sham and deception in questions in which minute accuracy is absolutely unattainable. I feel assured that no intelligent and candid man will trust the less to the certainty of my general conclusions because I refrain from the show of microscopic accuracy in the details.

Deducting from this number as accounted for above 2,331,000, there remain 1,063,000 unaccounted for. These form the population which, with greater or less truth, may be said to belong to the Established Church. A large number of these are, we fear, only nominal adherents.

Without wholly committing myself to the foregoing figures, or pretending to absolute accuracy in matters which, from their nature, cannot be certainly known from any data at present within our reach, we may fairly put down the state of parties in Scotland, viewed ecclesiastically and religiously, in the end of 1872 and beginning of 1873 as follows:—

| | | | |
|--|------------|--|-----------|
| Adherents of the Free Church,..... | 790,000 | | |
| Do. United Presbyterian Church, | 474,000 | | |
| | | | 1,264,000 |
| Do. Reformed Presbyterian | Do. 25,500 | | |
| Do. Original Secession | Do. 9,500 | | |
| | | | 35,000 |
| | | | 1,299,000 |
| Do. Episcopal | Do. 60,000 | | |
| Do. Congregational | Do. 33,000 | | |
| Do. Baptist | Do. 24,000 | | |
| Do. Methodist | Do. 20,000 | | |
| Do. Evangelical Union | Do. 30,000 | | |
| Plymouth Brethren, and sundry small Bodies, | 15,000 | | |
| City and Coast Missions, | 20,000 | | |
| | | | 202,000 |
| Total belonging to Evangelical Denominations | | | |
| not established, | | | 1,501,000 |
| Others:— | | | |
| Socinians and fifteen small Sects..... say | 10,000 | | |
| Roman Catholic Population,..... | 290,000 | | |
| Neglecting Ordinances, | 530,000 | | |
| | | | " 830,000 |
| | | | 2,331,000 |
| From entire population,..... | 3,394,000 | | |
| Deduct the population accounted for,.... | 2,331,000 | | |
| There remains for Established Church, .. | 1,063,000 | | |

Giving as the number of adherents of the Established 34·24 per cent. of the population, Romanists excepted, and 31·02 per cent. of the inhabitants of Scotland, while the other evangelical denominations constitute 48·35 per cent. of the former, and 44·22 per cent. of the entire population, and those neglecting ordinances are 17·07 per cent. of the professedly Protestant population.

But how, it may be asked, shall we be able to maintain these

conclusions in the face of official returns made by the General Assembly of the Established Church, and published in their Report—in many respects an excellent and commendable Report—on “Christian Life and Work,” and which has been so widely circulated and largely quoted in all parts of the world; in which it is confidently stated, and apparently demonstrated by figures, that the adherents of the Established Church so largely outnumber all the other Protestant Churches in Scotland put together.

It is from no hostility to the Established Church I enter on this investigation. The interests of truth and the claims of the neglected and perishing thousands outside of all religious denominations compel me to substantiate the accuracy of my conclusions.

I cannot be far wrong in the numbers I assign to other denominations; and if I had, as has been done by others, made the number of their adherents too few, my errors would soon be detected and exposed, and the numbers set down as neglecting ordinances would be treated as an exaggeration or a fiction. My loss of reputation for accuracy in such questions would have been a small matter, but the loss of souls and the welfare of the country are at stake, and however painful to myself or others whom I esteem, I must at all hazards make sure my grounds.

I know that some had the intentions of showing the injustice done to the “other denominations” in the Assembly’s Report, by representing all non-established churches as providing for only 38·39 per cent. of the population. The effect of this by itself would have been to reduce the number of those in that Report classed under the head of neglecting ordinances, and, as a consequence, the church would have been lulled into a state of self-complacent satisfaction with themselves and with the condition of the country.

Besides, I see no advantage to a Christian church to claim as adherents persons who seldom or never enter within her walls. They may be valued as supports by a political ecclesiastic, but they are no comfort to a Christian minister. Such external supporters may be *buttresses* to strengthen the walls of a secular institution, they are not “*pillars* in the temple of God.” We hope the Established Church will never trust to such outside *adherents*, not real *supports*.

To prevent any mistake, it is only fair that I give the results arrived at in that part of the Report which deals with the

“STATISTICS OF CHURCH ATTENDANCE.”

The following queries under this head were put to all the Established Church ministers in Scotland in 1872.

“I. PUBLIC WORSHIP.—Would you classify your parishioners under the headsof:—1st. Church-going; 2d. Neglecting Ordinances. And would you further state, as far as you can, the number of Protestant Church-going population adhering, 1st. To the Church of Scotland; and 2d. To other Protestant Churches?”

In answer to these and other interesting and important inquiries we are told the Committee received only 507 returns, many of them very incomplete,—a poor response, and most insufficient data for general conclusions, even if all were complete and correct, when we consider that the number of Churches is nearly three times the number of the returns, or 507 out of 1250.

The Report admits that the statistics are incomplete, and “*that therefore the tables do not give materials FOR COMPARING ONE PRESBYTERY OR SYNOD WITH ANOTHER.*” One would have thought that neither were they sufficient for a comparison of *one denomination with another, yet this, we are told, is their chief use.*

“(4.) The chief purpose they serve in their present form is to show the proportions which the various classes named at the head of columns 2, 3, 4 bear to each other in the section of the population contained in column 1.”

The separate congregations are not given, but the aggregate for each Presbytery, and those for each Synod. The result is as follows:—

| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. |
|--|------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Population analyzed in 507 Reports. | Church of Scotland. | Other Protestant Denominations. | Neglecting Ordinances. |
| 1,111,454 | 523,467 | 426,691 | 161,296 |

On this poor result of much labour and zeal on the part of the Committee is based the following boast: “What Parliament was induced not to exact in 1861 and 1871 by those interested in other denominations, the National Church may yet of her own free will

supply." I am happy to say that the Free Church put no obstacles in the way. I moved in the General Assembly of 1870 a petition to the House of Commons in favour of a religious census along with the civil one, which was carried unanimously, and a deputation appointed to press that and other matters on the Home Secretary.

On the same slender basis we have the following important inference: "The analysis brings out that, of the population other than Roman Catholic, 47·09 per cent. adhere to the Church of Scotland, 38·39 to other Protestant Churches, 14·51 per cent. to no Church." To make statistics even of an entire Church or population a reliable basis for such broad generalization, they require to be carefully handled, but when only a third of the whole, as in this case, and with no evidence of their being fairly *representative* of the whole is given, is rash and unfair to all concerned. They may be taken, as is said, "to refer to the best cases, and in others to the worst." But the question is not, Are the best and worst cases referred to? but, Are they found in such proportions as to represent the whole? For this there is not a shadow of evidence, but, as we shall see, much to the contrary. Yet on these data it is trumpeted over the whole world that the Established Church has "47·09 per cent. of the Protestant population within her pale," and a "large *majority* of the church-going belong to the Church of Scotland;" and "that as many as 1,500,000 of the inhabitants belong to the Established Church."

In regard to these returns, I would observe that there are three sources of error, which tend all in the same direction, and lead inevitably to an accumulation of error on one side.

1st. The schedules being no way compulsory, were almost sure to be filled up by the most active and earnest, and most probably only or chiefly by the most successful of the ministers of that Church, so that the 507 Reports in no way represent the whole 1250 parishes, but are almost sure to be in the vast majority of cases exceptionally favourable to the Established Church.

2d. Many of these earnest ministers are known to hold "broad" and "high" views on ecclesiastical questions, and to include as members and adherents of their Church a very large and heterogeneous following, on the principle enunciated by the Dean of

Exeter at a Church Congress in Bath last year, that "a National Church is obliged to be indulgent, so that the many birds of the air may be able to find shelter in its branches."

3d. The Returns being based not on the *practice* of the people in attending their own Church, a matter of which any faithful minister can form a judgment without going to ask the people, who will rarely acknowledge that they go to no Church. Such inquiries as to profession are of little value when not taken in connection with the practice of the parties. From these sources of error, apart altogether from any charge of carelessness or suspicion of intentional misrepresentation, we have no hesitation in saying that it would be a moral miracle if these 507 returns gave anything but a partial and one-sided view of the question as it affected the Established Church of Scotland.

But I have other and more conclusive proofs of the utter untrustworthiness of these returns.

First of all, I took much pains to test them by taking three or four Presbyteries as samples in different parts of the country. I took three in the Lowlands and two in the Highlands; and as the Free Church is strong in the Highland Presbyteries, I took those in which she is very weak in the South.

In each case I took care to get a report from *each Parish* (in many cases given frankly to my friends by the parish minister), or when that could not be got I was careful to assign a large ratio to the Established Church, in some cases more communicants than the Church was seated for. The parishes from which I got no returns did not contain in the aggregate so many as 22,000 of a population consisting of more than 290,000, not a tithe of the whole, and as even these were carefully considered, any errors on that score are trifling, and, so far as I can judge, in favour of the Established Church.

Samples of Presbyteries.

I do not give the numbers for each parish—that is not done in the report of the Assembly, but they are in my hands, and if the Established Church will publish their returns for each parish in the Presbyteries I use as tests, I shall be prepared to publish mine.

Taking the Presbytery of Linlithgow first, I give first of all the return by the Assembly's committee. It is thus:—

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Population analyzed, | 32,019, of which there are |
| Adherents of the Church of Scotland, | 13,660 = 42·61 per cent. |
| Adherents of all other Protestant denominations, | 8,887 = 27·79 „ |
| Neglecting ordinances, | 9,472 = 29·60 „ |

Roman Catholics are not included in this analysis.

Now as the Presbytery in 1872, making allowance for the increase since the census of 1871, was not less than 80,500, I cannot understand how it is, that as we are told nineteen new returns were sent in, and Torpichen alone neglected to discharge its duty, only 32,019 are reported on. It seems to prove that not only were the 507 returns far too few to form an estimate for the whole Church, even if all were complete, when of that limited number the analysis was so defective, that out of more than 78,000 souls represented by the nineteen returns in this Presbytery, only 32,019 are reported on. The minister of Torpichen was only responsible for 1630. As many as 38,000 are entirely ignored in the return; they are not found in any column of the Assembly's report.

My returns from the Presbytery of Linlithgow stand thus (the Roman Catholic population, being estimated at 7850, are excluded in both estimates of the ratio):—

20 Established churches contain 8450 communicants, representing 22,700 adherents, being 31·23 per cent. of the population, Romanists excepted.

44 Evangelical churches of all denominations contain 8556 communicants, 23,060 adherents, being 31·70 per cent.; while those neglecting ordinances are not fewer than 26,880, or 37·00 per cent.

This is one example of the way in which these returns are got up, and on which the estimate is based, that the Established Church embraces such a vast preponderance of the population as 47 per cent., and the other denominations are 9 per cent. below them, and the neglecters of ordinances are only a little over 14 per cent.

The Presbytery of Hamilton gives another striking proof of the worthlessness of such returns as those on which the general conclu-

sion has been based, that 47·09 per cent. of the population of Scotland belong to the Established Church, and only 38·39 to all other denominations, while only 14·50 per cent. are outside all church connection.

The returns for that Presbytery in the Report are as follows:—

| | |
|--|--------|
| Population analyzed, | 63,000 |
| Adherents of the Church of Scotland in the 63,000, | 25,894 |
| Adherents of all other denominations in the same number, ... | 16,891 |
| And neglecting ordinances, | 20,215 |

Here again there is much that is inexplicable. In the appendix we are told that there are “six new returns, 12 refer to last year, and none from Airdrie, Clarkston, Dalserf, Kilbride, New Monkland, and Stonehouse.”

The population of the Presbytery as corrected for 1872 is not less than 156,500. These six parishes which have sent in no returns have an aggregate population of only 38,600, and deducting for Roman Catholics who are not included in the returns 21,900, we find no fewer than 33,000 of the population unaccounted for in any way. They are not found amongst the 20,215 “neglecting ordinances,” the 25,894 “adherents of the Established Church,” the 16,891 of “other churches,” nor in the six parishes which sent no returns;—a source of error so evident and great that we wonder how any intelligent man could draw such important general inferences from data so untrustworthy.

In the following numbers I give returns carefully gathered from every one of the parishes with two exceptions, and when there was any doubt I always gave the Established Church the benefit of it:—

28 churches, 12,690 communicants, 33,630 adherents, or 25·02 per cent. of the population; 55 congregations, of other denominations, 13,954 communicants, 36,970 adherents, or 27·50 per cent. of population; neglecting ordinances, 64,000, or 47·54 per cent. of population. Romanists in each case excepted.

On examining the statistical returns of the Report to the Assembly of the Established Church for Presbyteries in the Highlands, I find the same inexplicable errors which I find in those for the south. For example, in the Presbytery of Tain it would appear that every parish has sent in returns, as is indicated

in the appendix. "*Tain* no new returns, ten refer to last year." But ten is the whole number of the parishes in the Presbytery, yet though all send in returns, they only give an "analysis" of 12,971, while the population is 17,284, so that 4313 are entirely overlooked.

The only way in which I can account for such a discrepancy, which I find in every Presbytery, is that either the returns are *very carelessly got up*, and are consequently of no value, and any general conclusions from these data are worse than useless; or that while there are returns from each of these parishes, these returns, while they answer other queries in the schedule, do not answer the questions on statistics at all. In which case the statement that there are "507 returns" would be deceptive, as there would not be 507 returns *on the subject* on which the report is made up. From the high character of the gentlemen on the committee, I have no doubt the former is the true solution.

For Presbyteries in the Highlands and for that of Kelso in the south I make no correction for increase in the population since last census, as the rate of increase is so very slow, and, as, in this case, the returns are for the previous year, it is not required.

I have not had a formal return from the different parishes in that Presbytery. But a thoroughly well informed and trustworthy friend, who had occasion to visit nearly every parish in the Presbytery, and who had the whole subject very carefully gone into by the ministers of the Free Church Presbytery of Tain, which is conterminous with that of the Established Church. From that friend I learn that the adherents of the Established Church within the bounds of the Presbytery "cannot exceed 850, at the very outside 950." The return in the report to the Established Assembly would make it appear that of the 12,971 analyzed there were 1237 adherents, which at the same rate would give 1650 for the whole Presbytery. That is to say, they claim one in ten of the population, while, with the estimate of competent men who have, with the exception of two congregations of United Presbyterians, with a membership of about 800 communicants between them, and about 250 Episcopalians, the whole population under their care they have not more than one in nineteen.

But the most remarkable case is that of the Presbytery of Lewis.

In the Assembly's report we have the following startling returns:—

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Population Analyzed, | | 10,639 |
| Belonging to Established Church, | | 1,635 |
| Belonging to other Denominations | | 7,765 |
| Neglecting Ordinances, | | 1,239 |

Leaving it to be *inferred*, and it is made a part of the basis of calculation of general results, that if the whole population, which consists of 23,439, had been analyzed, there would have been found:—

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Adherents of Established Church, | | 3,800 |
| Do. of other Denominations, | | 16,839 |
| Neglecting Ordinances, | | 2,800 |

The following was kindly furnished me by the Rev. Dr. Elder, of Rothesay, who visited the island last year:—

CHURCH STATISTICS OF PRESBYTERY OF LEWIS.

| | Total Pop. | Estab., U.P., and Epis. Chs. | Free Ch. Adherents. |
|---|--------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Stornoway } (Town and Country), } | 4,183 | About 400 | 3,783 |
| 2. Knock..... | 2,883 | 1 family, say..... 5 | 2,878 |
| 3. Back,*..... | 2,402 | 3 families, say.... 15 | 2,387 |
| 4. Cross,..... | 2,000 | 2 " " ... 10 | 1,990 |
| 5. Barvas,..... | 2,948 | Individuals " ... 6 | 2,942 |
| 6. Carloway,*..... | 2,703 | 2 families, " ... 10 | 2,693 |
| 7. Uig,..... | 2,159 | None | 2,159 |
| 8. Lochs,..... | 4,161 | 2 families, " ... 10 | 4,151 |
| | <hr/> 23,439 | <hr/> 456 | <hr/> 22,983 |

The statement made at the Presbytery was that probably not more than *five hundred* or so of the whole population would be found *not* adhering to the Free Church, and the above shows the result as ascertained in the several districts on the authority of the Free Church ministers and their several office-bearers. I have taken the average of *five* for a family when the number of families was specified. There is *no* Established Church in either *Back* or *Carloway*, and we could not ascertain that there are any United Presbyterians or Episcopalians, excepting in Stornoway. Excuse this hastily written statement, as my time is much occupied.

I ought perhaps to state that the church accommodation and attendance do not fairly represent the number of Free Church

adherents in Lewis, as the churches are generally too small for the districts, and also as the distances being sometimes very great, Sabbath services are often held by elders, teachers, and others in outlying districts, with the sanction of the ministers.

The following letter accompanied the foregoing table:—

Rothesay, 25th September, 1873.

My Dear Mr. Johnston,—I had the pleasure to receive your letter yesterday afternoon on my return from Campbelltown, and I gladly send you herewith the substance of my information regarding Lewis, as gathered from the Presbytery in conference, and confirmed by the detailed reports of the several Deacons' Courts during our visitation. I intend to report the details to the General Assembly along with the usual account of our visitation. Nothing can be more fallacious than the statement of the Established Church authorities to which you refer. It is perfectly well known that the people of Lewis are all but *universally* Free Church, and that, with the exception of the town of Stornoway, where a fragment of the population adhere to the Establishment, and where there is a small U. P. Congregation, and a mere handful of Episcopalians, there is not the face of a congregation of the Establishment throughout the island, and scarcely an individual, so far as we could learn, of any other denomination. The Established Church has *nominally* six charges in Lewis, and I question whether there is public worship regularly in any of their churches, excepting Stornoway, where there is a very small congregation. The U. P. congregation in Stornoway has increased a good deal within the last year or two, very much owing to inadequate supply in the Free Churches, where they must soon get either a new charge, or an efficient assistant to the minister, who has more on hand than one man can manage. We have *eight* Free Churches in Lewis, and they are all crowded and too small for the adherents. I may explain that the population of the several districts was kindly furnished to me by the public registrar, so that it may be relied on. It is about 500 more than we made out from the accounts given by the several Deacons' Courts, but I have preferred stating it as given by the registrar. Of course he gave no information as to the *religious* statistics, which are set down on the authority of the Presbytery and the several local office-bearers. I am not *quite* sure of the *proportions* of the population in Cross and Barvas, as they are given jointly in the registrar's returns; but the *adherents* in each are given as reported by the local office-bearers. If you wish for further or more complete information, you should apply to Rev. D. Macmaster, Back, by Stornoway, the Presbytery clerk, and a most intelligent man. Believe me, yours very truly,

ROBERT ELDER.

Rev. James Johnston.

In fairness it should be kept in mind, as the omission of the fact has been taken advantage of by the advocates of the Established Church, that the ministers and their families are not included in our returns.

A gentleman residing in the island, not a member of the Free Church, in answer to some of my queries, says:—

“1635,” he should have said 3800, “as the adherents of the Established Church in the Island of Lewis is *nonsense*, and the clergy who could make such a return should be reprimanded.” What would he have said if he had understood that the 1635 were found among 10,000 of the population, and that it was left for the parties who sent out the Schedule and presented the Report to the Assembly to infer that there were 3800 members of the island who clung to the Establishment, and that this gross mis-statement, by which the members of that church were represented as forming 16·00 per cent., instead of being between one and two per cent., went to swell the aggregate by which the adherents of that communion were made 47·09 per cent. of the Protestant population of the country?

The same gentleman says: “The late incumbent of Knock went to preach last Sunday in the church there accompanied by his driver. On his arrival, finding no one near about the place, he drove down to the brick-works, and brought up the man and his wife, who along with the driver formed the entire congregation. At Uig there is not one hearer; Locks, only the parish teacher and his family; and the same at Barvas; and at Cross the parson and family, and G. and family, and the Butt of Lewis, light keeper and small family,” constitute the adherents of the Established Church.

THE WHOLE OF SCOTLAND.

Returning to the aggregates for Scotland, we find a very striking confirmation of the accuracy of our estimate of the number of adherents of the Established Church in a work, *The Church of Scotland*, by the Rev. Dr. J. E. Cumming, published in 1871. While he claims a larger per centage of the Established, he gives an instructive proof of the fallacy of his conclusions at page 44. He there informs us that, “for the present year a Committee of the General Assembly is receiving returns of communicants in the church, and so far as these have come in they show a total of 390,409.” He adds in a foot-note, “We have received this information from a member of Committee, whose estimate of the congregations not returning

is at least 10,000 more." Whether we take the estimate of Dr. Cumming as above, or the 400,000 of this friend in the Committee, whom he seems to have thought over sanguine at that moment, in view of those returns which he gives for the whole of Scotland at 390,000, it matters little. On either estimate I can show that the adherents of the Established Church cannot be more than I have made them, while they may be a great deal less; if, as we suspect, these estimates are too high, or the actual returns too broad—taking in too large a membership, or neglecting to purge the Communion Rolls. Dr. Cumming calculates the number of adherents at a higher rate, both for the Free Church and Establishment, than Dr. Leone Levi—much higher than we are warranted in assuming for the rural parts of Scotland. I accept Dr. Levi's rule of multiplying the members by *three* to find the number of adherents in towns or mining and manufacturing districts, where many go to church without becoming members, or where they join at a later period of life (often only at marriage) than they do in the country. There are large districts of Scotland in which the whole population above a comparatively early age of maturity are members, and in which $2\frac{1}{2}$ is too high a figure to employ in multiplying the members for the adherents. For example, I took the Presbytery of Kelso as a district well known to me, and in which I had many willing friends to assist my inquiries, and there I found that, while the Assembly returns gave the following results:

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Population analyzed,..... | 4419, of which |
| Adherents of Established Church, | 2965, or 67 per cent. |
| Adherents of other Protestant Denominations, | 1429, or 32 do. |

The following was what I found the true state of matters as far as I could learn on good authority:—

| | |
|--|--------|
| The whole population analyzed,..... | 12,378 |
| Members of Established Church, | 2,400 |
| Members of all Protestant Churches,..... | 2,835 |

After deducting 235 members of Dissenting Churches who resided beyond the bounds of the Presbytery, I found that if we multiplied the number of members by 3, we would have required a population of nearly 3000 souls more than the Presbytery contained. Even to multiply by $2\frac{1}{2}$ was too much. That the only

way to make the membership and population tally, we had to multiply by $2\frac{2}{5}$.

There could be no doubt about the membership of the Dis-established Churches, as we had them from official authority, and great care was taken to be accurate with those of the Establishment, and the result was as above given, and the result is,

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Adherents of Established Churches,..... | 5760 = 48 per cent. |
| Do. other Churches, | 6240 = 52 do. |

instead of 67·00 and about 32·00, as in the imperfect and misleading returns of the Report.

But the chief interest of this case lies in the light it throws on the rule by which to find the number of adherents from the number of communicants. Apply this rule to the 390,000 members of the Established Church, in 1871, as given by Dr. Cumming. He gives us at page 45 a clue to the proportion of country and town members from data fallacious as rules for the *absolute* number of adherents, but sufficient as a guide to the *proportion* residing in town, as compared with those in the country, he says that there are 903,038 living in the country, and 337,500 in towns, so that nearly *three-fourths* of the adherents of the Established Church are found in the country. Allowing that that includes a considerable number of mining districts, and taking $2\frac{1}{2}$ as our multiplier, instead of $2\frac{2}{5}$, and further, allowing *two-thirds* instead of three-fourths for the country, and one-third for the towns, we find that even the 400,000 claimed by the sanguine member of committee, will only give 1,067,000, most wonderfully near my estimate of 1,063,000. Let us even allow that only *half* are found in rural districts, but take Dr. C.'s more modest and much more probable estimate of 390,000 members, and we find that multiplying the one half by three, and the other by two and a half, we have 1,072,500 adherents, the largest number to which the Established Church can lay claim.

The largest estimate of the membership of the Established Church which I have ever seen is that of Dr. Herdman, when his object was to rebuke, as he faithfully did, the members of his own, for not contributing for missionary objects so liberally as those of other churches. He calculated on the assumption that there were 430,000 communicants in 1873. This would give 1,145,000

adherents. For this large estimate of membership there is not the shadow of solid ground to rest on. Even the 400,000 or 390,000 members given from returns and rough estimates are very high figures, and we may say of them, with far more show of truth than Dr. Cumming does of the United Presbyterian Church, "There remains only that the communicants in the U.P. (Established?) Church must be given at too large a figure as being on communion-rolls loosely kept, the names of persons who have removed or died not being duly deleted."

To multiply the number of communicants who are chiefly found in rural districts of Scotland by *three*, according to Mr. Leoni Levi's rule, is obviously unwarrantable. That rule is only applied by Mr. Levi to congregations of Presbyterians in England, where the habits of the people, even when they are Scotch, is altogether different, and it was only approved by him when I consulted him as to the large towns in Scotland. Yet even by that rule the 390,000 communicants would only give 1,170,000 adherents.

There are two other methods by which it is attempted to prove that the Established Church numbers nearly half the population of Scotland, and to which I refer merely because it would prove that there were few if any persons in all Scotland who did not belong to some church or other.

1st. It is said the "Registrar General's report of marriages gives 43·87 per cent. as performed by ministers of the Established Church, from which it is inferred that 43·87 per cent., or 1,490,000 of the population, belong to the National Church. But it is well known that every marriage in Scotland is performed by a minister of some church, and by this mode of calculation every man and woman in Scotland would be made out a member or adherent of some church—a most egregious and pernicious error; and it is equally well known that those who attend no church generally go to the minister of the Established Church on such occasions.

2d. The report of the Education Commissioners in 1867 is appealed to, and from that the inference is drawn that the adherents of the Establishment are 44·4 per cent. of the population.

But here there are two fundamental and fatal sources of error. First, there is a return for the *denomination* of the children *only in rural districts and small towns*, and that on *profession*, and out

of 2,000,000 of the population thus analyzed, there are only 3976 children returned under the heading "Denomination unknown." So that by this argument the whole 2,000,000 are all devout and church-going people—not calling for any anxiety or effort on the part of the church. Second, it is a fact recorded in the report of the Commissioners that for the remaining 1,000,000 in 1867, there was not even the denominational return on the profession of the *scholar*, but only the denomination of the *school*, and yet those who use these returns for ascertaining the number of adherents of the Established Church, treat these returns as all trustworthy for this purpose. I need not point out how utterly fallacious such reasoning is. The Established and Free Churches alone gain by such a mode of reckoning. They only having schools on a large scale.

I have been thus careful in verifying my estimate of the number of adherents in the Established Church by a twofold process, in order that I may establish my estimate of the number of those who attend no church. Allowing the number of these adherents to be 1,067,000, which is a very liberal estimate, it leaves 530,000 of the inhabitants of Scotland outside all church connection. We have too much reason to fear that the number assigned to that church is too large, and that the number neglecting all religious ordinances of any church or any mission is not much if at all under 600,000 *souls*.

In a tabulated form, thus:—

| | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Population of Scotland, 1872,..... | | 3,394,000 |
| Belonging to Established Church, | 1,063,000 | |
| — Free Do. | 790,000 | |
| — United Presbyterian Do. | 474,000 | |
| | <hr/> | |
| — Reformed and Original Secession..... | 35,000 | |
| | <hr/> | |
| — Presbyterian Population, | | 2,362,000 |
| — Other Denominations, | | 202,000 |
| | | <hr/> |
| — Total Evangelical Denominations, | | 2,564,000 |
| — Roman Catholic Church,..... | 290,000 | |
| — Socinians and other Sects,..... | 10,000 | |
| | <hr/> | |
| | | 300,000 |
| Neglecting Ordinances,..... | | 530,000 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | 830,000 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | 3,394,000 |
| | | <hr/> |

Our principal aim in presenting the subject of our inquiry in this form, is, that we may fasten on these large and powerfully Presbyterian churches a due share of responsibility for the work which is to be done.

On the three leading Presbyterian churches devolves the great responsibility to God and to the country. Numbering as they do 2,300,000 of the population of Scotland, what might they not accomplish? That population being not only two-thirds of the whole, but numbering in its ranks a vastly greater proportion of the intelligence, the moral character, the wealth and political power of the country, their responsibility is proportionably great.

We call attention to this, not that these churches may boast of their position and power, but that they may be humbled in the dust when they see, that with all their great advantages they have done so little, and have allowed so many in our country to fall away from the ordinances of what was once a united church, embracing within its folds almost every one of the population of the country, and giving every child in Scotland a thorough secular and religious education. We point to the vast preponderance of the Presbyterian churches, not that they may assert a lordly superiority over other churches, but that they may be ashamed of their own divisions, and learn to combine among themselves, and co-operate with all denominations in seeking to reclaim those who have wandered from the fold, and are now like sheep without a shepherd. When I speak of 500,000 or 600,000 of the population of Scotland of all ages, being *outside the churches* of Christ or *neglecting ordinances*; let it not be supposed that I assert that these are all utterly neglected by the churches or by the Christian people of Scotland. I never speak of them as many do, as being our *home heathen*. No man who knows what heathenism is will apply the term to any very large part of the population of our country. Many of them may be addicted to forms of vice unknown among the heathen. Some may have sunk to a depth of moral degradation lower than can be found in many heathen lands. But a large number of those who neglect ordinances are intelligent, moral, and respectable citizens. Amongst them are to be found the tender ties and amenities of social and domestic life, some with not a little natural religiousness of disposition and

habits. Far be it from me to depreciate, further still to despise any portion of my fellow-countrymen. I find among that class many noble specimens of manhood and womanhood, and more lovely and lovable specimens of childhood's innocence and playfulness are not to be found in the lordly halls of proud professors in the Church, than are to be found in the lowly homes of some of those who make no profession of religion. But even if this were true of the larger number of these neglecters of the ordinances of religion, we cannot shut our eyes to the painful fact that they are "far from God," and are strangers to his grace, and that they are perishing in their sins. Even if they were as amiable and upright as the young ruler, of whom we are told that "Jesus beholding him loved him," and yet as he went away refusing to follow Jesus, the Saviour, in deepest sorrow, uttered over him the painful truth, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven." These men of whom we speak are seldom hindered by riches. But poverty has its dangers as well as riches, "the destruction of the poor is their poverty." It is enough to the church to know that these men and their families are "without God and without hope."

We also admit that a large portion of those whom I class as "Neglecting Ordinances," or "Outside the Church," are to a greater or less degree brought in some way or other under the sound and influence of the gospel. Some are under the influence of godly members of their families. They are visited occasionally by tract distributors. They may occasionally see a missionary or minister when visiting their neighbours; and the great majority of them have a knowledge of God and of His Word. They may know of a Saviour and of the way of salvation. But what is the effect and bearing of all this knowledge? It may only tend to *harden their hearts*, and *add to their condemnation*. "If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin, but now have they no cloak for their sin." It only puts them in the condition of the "servant who *knew his Lord's will*, and did commit things worthy of stripes, who shall *beaten with many stripes*."

The fact is patent, they are godless. They are Christless, and living within reach of the Christian church—living in the heart of a professedly Christian nation, and by their presence a blessing or a

bane to the church of God. Let the church, in the spirit of her Lord, set herself to reclaim these wanderers, and the blessing of God will rest upon her. Let her neglect them and leave their children, now growing up in godless homes, and ere long they will react on the life of the church, undermine her influence, and endanger social order.

Let the fact be distinctly understood and deliberately weighed *that this class is on the increase* in all our mining and manufacturing centres of industry. Even in rural districts there is a growing neglect of the ordinances of religion. And in some parts of the Highlands where the Established Church is a nullity—and in cases where men are ordained to a manse and stipend without the shadow of a congregation, and without the slightest expectation of gathering one, worse than a nullity—there are large districts where the scattered population is ill provided with the means of grace.

But it is to the rapidly increasing population in industrial centres that the energies of the Church must be first directed. To the credit of the Highlanders in their native home, they cling to their religion under many difficulties, and train their children in the fear of God. But in our Lowlands the race for riches or the struggle for existence blunts the religious feelings, while the quickening of mental activity and the ready means for gratifying lower appetites and passions, render them on the one hand a prey to intellectual errors and moral corruptions themselves, and on the other a spreading leprosy in society around them.

I close with the question with which I began, Are the churches of Scotland capable of dealing successfully with the great moral, social, and religious evils which now threaten to sap the foundations of society? In view of these evils the Church is on her trial. Her ability to deal with those great practical questions which perplex the minds of politicians, patriots, and philanthropists, and which pain the hearts of all pious men, will be the test by which she will be tried. The scoffs of infidels and the sneers of men of science she may despise, they are as the idle wind puffing against a rock. But it is for the removal of the religious and moral evils afflicting our race that the Church exists, and if she does not fulfil the great ends for which she is set up on earth, however venerable her age and sacred her origin, she must share the fate of all institutions which fall short of their original aim and end.

I am convinced the churches of Scotland are capable of dealing successfully with these great and growing evils. I will not attempt to point out the way. It is enough if I arrest and fix attention on them, they are these: Irreligion, drunkenness, commercial dishonesty, pauperism, crime, ignorance, and the disordered relations between employers and employed, or labour and capital—I would only add, ecclesiastical divisions and disputes, mean defeat and ruin to our best schemes. Dogmatic discussion of the minor points of difference will deaden our spiritual life, and neglect of the perishing around us will not only be destruction to them, but to the church and the nation disaster and decay.

On the other hand, let those whom we have shown to be responsible, combine, or in a Christian spirit, co-operate

1st. To discover by careful statistics the parts of the country in which there is a real want of the ordinances of religion; and

2d. Combine or co-operate to supply that want by a living localized ministry, and by the blessing of God on such wise and well-directed efforts, originated and sustained by the spirit of love to God and man, we might hope to see another Reformation in Scotland—the parochial system of Knox adapted to the altered condition of our population—the pious aspirations of Chalmers for “territorial charges in our large towns” realized, and the prophetic anticipation fulfilled, “Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever; the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.”





